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2 Romanian defectors being kept by CIA say it is breaking promises

Washington (Reuter)—Two Romanian diplomats who defected to the United States have accused the Central Intelligence Agency of breaking promises to resettle them in this country in return for giving secrets about Romania.

They are Nicolae Horodincea, 35, formerly third secretary at the Romanian Embassy in Washington, and Nicola Traian, 32, who held the same rank at the mission in Islamabad, Pakistan.

CIA spokesman Dale Peterson said after lengthy high-level consideration the agency decided not to comment on the charges.

Mr. Horodincea, his wife and 3-year-old son were given asylum in March, 1980, after he drove into nearby Fort Belvoir, Va. His wife and son have since returned to Romania.

Mr. Traian defected in November, 1979, with his wife and two children. His defection escaped press notice at that time.

The two men, now living in Northern Virginia with new identities, laid out their complaints against the CIA in an interview with Reuter after they were told to move out of apartments furnished and paid for by the CIA.

"They have squeezed me, used me and dumped me," Mr. Traian said.

Mr. Traian also accused the CIA of knocking his wife unconscious last October in an attempt to scare them.

"I don't want anything else except what they promised—help to buy a house, get a job, pay for school until my children are 6, health insurance, life insurance," he said.

He said CIA officials had promised these benefits during six months of debriefings, but other officials charged with resettling him and his family subsequently reneged on them.

Mr. Horodincea said the CIA "skinned" him of information, reduced promised financial aid and did not help him find work.

What prompted the two men to break cover and seek out a reporter with their story was a telephone call May 1 from Thomas La Manna, a CIA official. Mr. La Manna told Mr. Horodincea his "safe house" arrangement, a rented apartment, would end May 31 and a CIA truck would collect the agency's furniture.

Recounting the 8 a.m. conversation, Mr. Horodincea said he slammed down the phone and immediately called the Romanian ambassador in Washington, Nicolae Ionescu. Later that day he visited him to ask what his fate would be if he returned home.

"He could not say what would happen," Mr. Horodincea said.

The former embassy official, who was responsible for congressional and press relations, has since learned from the CIA and his family in Romania that he was sentenced to death in absentia. He has dropped the idea of going back.

Mr. Traian said he was the Romanian intelligence agency station chief in Islamabad and had been in touch with U.S. officials for months before his defection. He said his background made returning to Romania out of the question.

His wife, Cristina, took a similar call a few hours later from Mr. La Manna's deputy. She asked: "What are we to do, go live in the park?" The reply was "Buy a tent and go live in the park," her husband said.

In the course of repeated inquiries by a reporter and congressional aides over the past month, the agency apparently decided to moderate its position on evicting the two defectors.

Last Saturday a State Department official told Mr. Horodincea he could stay in his apartment and the CIA would collect his furniture piece by piece rather than all at once.

Mr. Traian's lawyer received a phone call from the CIA after months of waiting and was told the agency wanted to see him soon.

Mr. Traian said no reason was given for the change of heart.

The main complaint of both men was that, after months of giving secrets and while they were learning new professions, CIA support was barely above subsistence level.

They said the agency cut off health and child education benefits despite their inability to make up the losses.

Because nothing was ever put in writing, they felt at the mercy of their resettlement officer.